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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN OKALOOSA COUNTY RECOGNIZES NATIONAL DEC AWARENESS DAY



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FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. — Florida Department of Health in Okaloosa County recognized April 24 as National Drug Endangered Children Awareness Day. DOH-Okaloosa along with multidisciplinary community partners comprise the Okaloosa Drug Endangered Children and Community Alliance (Okaloosa DEC-C). The primary goal is to provide Drug Endangered Children (DEC) Awareness Training to community members to increase the identification of drug endangered children at risk.

According to the National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children, drug endangered children are children who are at risk of suffering physical or emotional harm because of illegal drug use, manufacturing, possession, cultivation or distribution.

“Okaloosa DEC-C exceeded goals set in 2018 through DEC Awareness Training in the schools, nonprofit agencies, state-run programs and the Emerald Coast Children’s Advocacy Center’s Annual Conference,” said Jennifer Clark, Co-Champion of Okaloosa DEC-C. “The message of how drug endangered children are profoundly affected and how we can be proactive and think outside the box helps to ensure they are identified, protected, healthy and get the happy childhoods they deserve.”

As of March 2019, the Okaloosa DEC-C Alliance has:

- Provided nine DEC awareness trainings to over 200 community members.
- Provided informational stickers to first responders to facilitate referrals of families to substance abuse services.
- Worked with hospitals and emergency medical services (EMS) to develop policies and implementation of cord blood testing to expedite appropriate treatment of drug-exposed newborns.
- Improved response coordination among law enforcement, the Florida Department of Children and Families, the school district and the Emerald Coast Children’s Advocacy Center.

If you are interested in DEC Awareness Training for your workplace or community organization email HealthyOkaloosa@flhealth.gov.

For more information about DEC, you can visit www.nationaldec.org.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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